Australians’ Use of and Satisfaction with e-Government Services – 2007

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AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OFFICE (AGIMO)
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Foreword

The application of information and communication technologies to government administration, information and services is transforming the way governments operate.

This is the third report in a time series of studies into Australians’ use of and satisfaction with e-government services. The studies provide a clear picture of the changes in the way people are interacting with governments and in citizen preference for government service delivery.

This report shows that the internet has become an indispensable channel for the delivery of government services to Australians; its use is continuing to grow and it is now the preferred service delivery channel for a majority of people.

The report also highlights the continuing challenges facing government administration in delivering services to the Australian public. Citizens are saying they value convenience in their interactions with government agencies, although for some, the advantages of being able to deal directly with ‘real’ people face-to-face or by telephone are preferable. Citizens are also saying they want e-government services and government websites to be easier to find and to use. There is an argument for governments to consolidate websites, to improve their links and to foster better connections to related services.

The insights provided by this report into the changing ways people interact with government and their preferences for doing so provide a solid foundation for governments to improve how their services are delivered.

THE HON LINDSAY TANNER MP
Minister for Finance and Deregulation
Australians’ Use of and Satisfaction with e-Government Services
Executive Summary

1.1 About the study

The Australian Government, through the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO), commissioned the first study of Australians’ use of and satisfaction with e-government services in 2004–05. The study was conducted again in 2006 and repeated in 2007 to monitor use and satisfaction levels over time.

This study explores:

• how people use the internet, telephone, mail and in-person service delivery channels to contact government
• satisfaction with these service delivery channels, including reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction
• motivations for and barriers to using e-government services (government services provided through the internet and telephone1)
• preferences for future service delivery.

1.2 Major findings

The use of e-government services for contacting government continues to grow while in-person contact is declining. Growth is being driven by increased use of the internet, rather than the telephone.

• The proportion of people who used the internet for their most recent contact with government has grown: from 19% in 2004–05 to 25% in 2006 and 29% in 2007.
• Three in five people (59%) have contacted government using the internet at least once in the previous 12 months—an increase from 39% in 2004–05 and 48% in 2006.
• A quarter of people (25%) now use the internet for the majority (all or most) of their contact with government.
• There has been a small increase in the proportion of people whose most recent contact with government was by telephone: 28% in 2004–05 and in 2006, to 32% in 2007.
• The most common way of contacting government remains in person, although this has declined each year: from 46% in 2004–05 and 43% in 2006, to 37% in 2007.
• The frequency with which government websites are accessed continues to increase: two in five (43%) of those who had contacted government over the internet in the previous 12 months indicated that the frequency of their use of government websites has increased in that time. This is a similar increase to 2006.

1 Telephone—in this report this refers to use of a landline. In the 2006 and 2007 studies respondents also had the option to nominate the mobile phone, SMS, or using a mobile to access the internet (3G) as the channel used for their last contact with government. To date the numbers of responses in these categories have not been of sufficient size to be reported.
The internet is now the preferred way to contact government.

- Two in five (41%) people would now prefer to contact government by internet. This is a substantial increase from 2004–05, when less than a third (31%) nominated the internet as their preference.
- At the same time, there has been an ongoing decline in preference for in-person contact; this has fallen from 33% in 2004–05 to 20% in 2007.
- There is a strong linear relationship between age and preferred means of contacting government. The younger the person, the more likely they are to prefer the internet, while the older the person, the more likely their preference is to be for telephone and, to a lesser extent, in-person contact.

Fewer people use the internet to contact government than would prefer to do so. More people make contact in person than would prefer to do so.

- Only seven in ten (70%) of those who would prefer to contact government by internet actually used that channel for their last contact with government, a ratio of preference to actual use consistent with previous studies. The main reasons for not using the internet in these circumstances were the unavailability of an online option or a necessity for in-person contact.

Convenience continues to be a prime motivation for use of e-government channels.

- The core factors motivating internet use, convenience and time savings, have been stable since 2004–05. Specific reasons include being able to make contact at a time that suits and to avoid queues or having to wait for information or forms to be sent out.
- The motivations for using the telephone are similar and have varied little since 2004–05. The telephone enables contact at a time that suits and saves time compared with in-person and mail contact. The advantages it offers for one-to-one interaction are also important motivators, particularly the capacity to speak to a ‘real’ person and the opportunity to explain and clarify issues.

The majority of people could be encouraged to use the internet more to contact government.

- Over three in four (78%) people indicated they could be encouraged to increase their use of the internet to contact government. Just over half (55%) of those who are not internet users at all could be encouraged to start using the internet to contact government.
- Generally, an increase in use could be encouraged by:
  - improvements to the usability of government websites; particularly by making government services easier to find and through better website layout and navigation tools
  - improved website content, particularly in the detail, quality and appropriateness of information.
- Preference for dealing with a ‘real person’ continues to be a considerable barrier to greater e-government uptake. Awareness of online options also remains an issue.
Satisfaction with service delivery has remained constant and at very high levels.

- Most people are satisfied with the service received when dealing with government and were able to achieve their intended outcome. This is consistent with earlier studies.
- The length of time spent waiting for a reply continues to be the lowest area of satisfaction, although this has improved from 2006.
- Dissatisfaction is relatively low overall. The main reasons for dissatisfaction are customer service related, particularly the time taken for replies and being given incorrect advice.

Take-up of telecommunication services is increasing.

- Broadband connectivity has grown substantially, with 61% of people who have contacted government in the previous 12 months now having a broadband connection (up from 44% in 2006). Twenty-five per cent of those without broadband intend to have it connected in the next 12 months.
- There is considerable use of newer communication technologies. More than four in five (82%) people undertake at least one of these activities monthly, the most common being email (75%) and SMS2 (57%).

1.3 Conclusions

The continued growth in use of e-government services indicates that the more significant barriers to greater e-government uptake identified in the initial 2004–05 study have largely been overcome, although some challenges remain.

- More people would use e-government services if they were aware of their availability.
- Improvements to the discoverability of government services and the usability of government websites, particularly website navigation, are still required.

Opportunities remain to increase the use of e-government services.

- Many people use non e-government channels even though these are not their preference. Most people would prefer to contact government using an e-government service, indicating a potentially strong future for greater e-government use.
- The strength of preference for the internet suggests that it, rather than the telephone, will drive any future demand for e-government services.
- A large proportion of those who did not use the internet for their last contact with government do, however, use the internet for other reasons. While not all government service delivery can be conducted through the internet, this suggests that considerable potential for greater use of the internet for government service delivery remains.
- Most people who use the internet to contact government could be encouraged to increase their use.

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2 Short Messaging Service – text messaging using mobile phone networks.
• Over half of those who do not use the internet at all could be encouraged to start doing so, although the barriers to greater use for this group (skill and infrastructure issues) are not easily overcome.
• Focus group participants saw greater dependence on the internet for contact with government as inevitable.

Future growth in use of e-government services will require improved website content and design, and expanded access to and awareness of online services.
• Strategies to make online government services easier to find or use would support greater use of the internet, as would improvements to the management and presentation of content, and in the type and quality of information available from websites.
• Age is a significant factor in internet use and preference; both decline substantially with age. However there has been an increase in use of the internet to contact government across all age groups since 2004–05, in particular in older age groups. This has ramifications, reinforced by focus group participants, for future service delivery design.

Satisfaction with service delivery remains high, but standards will need to be refined and adapted for this to continue.
• The continued high level of satisfaction with service delivery is significant given that expectations have risen in recent years as large commercial organisations have invested in improving online service delivery. The fact that government is keeping pace—demonstrated by constant, high levels of satisfaction—is an achievement.
• Current approaches and standards, however, will need to be refined and adapted to continue to achieve high levels of satisfaction. An area for future focus is the dissatisfaction expressed with the length of time for responses from government.
Australians’ Use of and Satisfaction with e-Government Services
two Use of e-Government Services
two Use of e-Government Services

Overview

- The use of e-government services (internet and telephone) has continued to grow in 2007. This has primarily come from an expanded use of the internet. Telephone use has remained relatively static, although 2007 has seen a small increase (4%) compared with previous years.
  - Fifty nine per cent of people who accessed government services in the previous 12 months used the internet to do so at least once. This has increased from 48% in 2006 and 39% in 2004–05.
  - In 2007, only two in five people (41%) had NOT used the internet to contact government in the previous 12 months. In 2004–05, the opposite situation existed: only two in five (39%) people HAD used the internet to contact government in the previous 12 months.
  - A quarter (25%) of people now use the internet for the majority (all or most) of their contact with government, a significant increase from 2004–05 (14%).
- Internet growth has been offset by a move away from in-person contact; this has dropped from 46% in 2004–05 to 37% in 2007. Nevertheless, in-person contact remains the most common means of contacting government.
- While use of the internet has been increasing at all levels of government since 2004–05, growth has been most notable at the state, territory and local levels of government, with the strongest growth at local government.
- Three in five (61%) people currently have a broadband connection, a substantial increase since 2006 (44%). One quarter (25%) of those without broadband intend to have it connected in the next 12 months.

2.1 Overall use of government services

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their most recent contact with government in the previous 12 months. These questions specifically related to:

- **Service delivery channel**—method of contact: whether the telephone, internet, mail, in-person contact or another channel was used.
- **Level of government**—whether their most recent contact was with the Australian, state, territory, or local government.
- **Type of transaction**—whether they were engaged in information services (seeking, exchanging or providing information) or making a payment.
- **Service accessed**—the type of government service accessed.
2.1.1 Service delivery channel used for most recent contact with government

The use of e-government services for contacting government is continuing to grow while in-person contact is declining. Growth is being driven by increased use of the internet, rather than the telephone.

Using the internet to contact government has grown each year: from 19% in 2004–05, to 25% in 2006, and 29% in 2007.

This growth has been offset by a move away from in-person contact; this has declined from 46% in 2004–05 to 37% in 2007. Nevertheless, it remains the most common means of contacting government.

There has been relatively little change in the proportion of people contacting government by telephone or mail since 2004–05.

Figure 1 Most recent use of government services by service delivery channel

Q4. Thinking of this most recent contact, did you do this...?
Base: All respondents (n=4016)
Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% as some respondents reported using more than one channel for the same government service.
2.1.2 Level of government contacted

Respondents were also asked to specify the level of government for their most recent government contact. In 2007, the proportion of people who had contacted the Australian Government was 42%, an increase from 2006 and 2004–05 (35%).

In-person contact remains the most commonly used way of contacting all three levels of government—Australian (33%), state or territory (37%) and local (36%). The level of in-person contact of the Australian Government has remained relatively stable, at approximately one in three, for the three years of this series of studies. However, levels of in-person contact of state, territory and local governments have declined significantly since 2006.

While overall use of the internet has been increasing for all levels of government, growth is most notable at state, territory and local government, with the strongest growth at local government. This has increased from 14% in 2004–05 to 24% in 2007.

Figure 2 Level of government for most recent contact

Q3C. What was the level of government for this contact?
Base: All respondents (n=4016)
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
2.1.3 Type of transactions being undertaken

The reasons people contact government services can be broadly classified under four categories:
- an individual sought or obtained information only
- an individual provided information, but did not exchange information
- an individual exchanged information with government
- an individual made or received a payment.

Figure 3 reveals that the types of transactions undertaken with government have been relatively stable over the three years of this series of studies. In 2007, 53% exchanged information in their most recent contact with government. (This included 20% who made or received a payment.) Those who only sought information accounted for 27%, while 19% only provided information.

Figure 3 Use of government services by type of transaction

Q38. What was the reason for this contact?
Base: All respondents (n=4016)
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
In 2007 the pattern of use of service delivery channels for government transactions differs from 2006:

- In 2007 the internet was mainly used to contact government for seeking information (44%) and exchanging information (25%). While seeking information was also the main use of the internet in 2006 (54%), use of the internet for payments was higher (29%).

- In 2007 the telephone was mainly used for exchanging information (37%) and to a lesser extent seeking information (28%). In contrast, the telephone was mainly used in 2006 for seeking information (46%); with other use relatively evenly divided between providing information (26%), exchanging information (22%) and making payments (24%).

- The main use of in-person contact in 2007 was for exchanging information (36%), whereas it was mainly used for making payments (45%) in 2006.

- The main role of mail for contacting government in 2007 was exchanging information (40%), whereas in 2006 it was principally used for both providing information (43%) and making payments (39%).

**Figure 4  Type of transaction by channel of delivery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought information</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided information</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanged information</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made payment</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought information</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided information</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanged information</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made payment</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought information</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided information</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanged information</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made payment</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sought information</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided information</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanged information</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made payment</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.4 Types of services being accessed

‘Community and social services’ (25%) continues to be the most commonly accessed category of government service, with a slight increase in access from 2006 and 2004–05. ‘Transport’ and ‘business services, economics, finance and taxation’ remain the next most common categories of services used, although the proportions for both have decreased since 2006.

**Figure 5: Government service categories used in previous 12 months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Category</th>
<th>2004–05</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community and social services</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business services, economics, finance and taxation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land, property, planning and construction</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and health services</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary industry, natural resources and energy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International, travel and immigration</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political system, election and representation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment, climate and conservation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, justice and consumer protection</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services, defence and national security</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3A. I would like you to think of government services, of any type at all in Australia, including local councils, state governments and the Australian Government. I am interested in all contact you have had with ANY government services in the PAST 12 MONTHS. Contact can include applying for things, providing information about yourself, making payments, enquiries, or looking for information. What was the MOST RECENT contact you had with a government service? Please name the service you contacted and the reason for the contact.

Base: All respondents (n=4016)

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding of decimals.
In 2007 the most frequently reported specific types of services (that is at the level below the service category) continue to be similar to previous years, although at lower levels:

- car, boat, vehicle registrations and licences (8% compared with 16% in 2006 and 13% in 2004–05)
- land tax or rates (7% compared with 10% in 2006 and in 2004–05)
- income or personal tax (7% compared with 11% in 2006 and 8% in 2004–05)
- family benefits, child allowance or childcare benefits (6% compared with 8% in 2006 and 7% in 2004–05).

**Figure 6** Top 10 specific services used (by any channel) in previous 12 months

Q3A. I would like you to think of government services, of any type at all in Australia, including local councils, state governments and the Australian Government. I am interested in all contact you have had with ANY government services in the PAST 12 MONTHS. Contact can include applying for things, providing information about you, making payments, enquiries, or looking for information. What was the MOST RECENT contact you had with a government service? Please name the service you contacted and the reason for the contact.

Base: All respondents (n=4016)

Note: Totals do not add up to 100% as only the top 10 specific services used are reported in the above figure.
2.2 Use of government services through the internet

2.2.1 General use of the internet

Over three in four (78%) people who used a government service in the previous 12 months use the internet—but not necessarily to contact government. While almost all younger people are internet users, there is a substantial drop in internet use amongst those over 65.

Figure 7 General internet use and the age of the user

Growth in internet use in the three years of this series of studies is most pronounced in older age groups.

Figure 8 Trends in general internet use by age

Q1: Do you use the internet?
Base: All respondents (n=4016)
2.2.2 Use of the internet to access government in the previous 12 months

The number of people who access government services by internet continues to show strong growth:

- Fifty nine per cent of people who accessed a government service in the previous 12 months used the internet to do so at least once. This has increased from 48% in 2006 and 39% in 2004–05.
- In 2007, only two in five people (41%) have NOT used the internet to contact government in the previous 12 months. In 2004–05, the opposite situation existed whereby only two in five (39%) people HAD used the internet in the previous 12 months.

At the same time, the extent to which people use the internet to make most of their contact with government has also increased. The strength of use is demonstrated by the fact that 25% of people now use the internet for the majority (all or most) of their contact with government, a significant increase from 2004–05 (14%).

Figure 9 Use of the internet to contact government in the previous 12 months

There are a number of factors that affect the likelihood of using the internet to contact government:

- **Age**—Younger people are more likely to use the internet to contact government. Three in four (75%) aged 34 or younger use the internet to do so compared with half of those aged between 55 and 64 (49%), and one in five (19%) aged 65 or older. Use of the internet to contact government, however, has increased across all age groups since 2004–05. The increase is most pronounced in older age groups.
- **Gender**—Males (62%) are more likely than females (56%) to have used the internet to contact government.
• **Education**—Three quarters (74%) of those with a tertiary qualification used the internet to access government, compared with half (48%) of those without tertiary qualification.

• **Household income**—Three quarters (74%) of those with an annual household income above $50,000 used the internet to contact government at least once, compared with 40% of those with a lower household income.

• **Location**—Those living in rural/remote (45%) and regional (53%) areas are less likely to have used the internet to contact government than those in metropolitan (62%) areas.

![Figure 10  Age profile of internet use for contact with government](image)

Q12. Thinking of all the contacts that you had with government agencies and services over the past 12 months, about what proportion of these took place over the internet?

*Base: All respondents (n=4016)*

2.2.3 Disability as a barrier to internet use

Six per cent of people who were not internet users indicated they had a disability that made it difficult to use the internet. The main types of disabilities identified were:

- Physical restriction: 31%
- Sensory and speech (including sight problems): 17%
- Psychological: 9%
- Intellectual: 8%
- Head injury, stroke or brain damage: 4%

The pattern of these results is similar to the 2006 findings, where four per cent of those who had never used the internet indicated they had a disability that made it difficult to do so. The results should be regarded as indicative estimates only because the number of respondents to this question was very small (N=52).
2.2.4 Use of government internet sites

Half (52%) of those who had contacted government through the internet have not changed the extent to which they use government websites over the previous 12 months. Two in five (43%) however, indicated that the frequency of their use of government websites has increased in this time. Relatively few (4%) have reduced their use. This is a similar rate of growth to 2006 (44%).

The most common reason provided for increased use of government internet sites was the need for and availability of more information; although this has dropped slightly from 21% in 2006 to 18% in 2007. One in ten (10%) people attributed their increased use to a change in their job. One in ten (10%) said their use had increased because they were using more government services (up from 6% in 2006). Convenience was relatively important in 2006 (19%); however this has dropped to 4% in 2007.

2.3 Use of telecommunication services

2.3.1 Broadband coverage

There has been strong growth in access to broadband since 2006. Three in five (61%) people now have a broadband connection compared with 44% in 2006.

There are regional differences in this broadband access: 42% of those in rural/remote areas, 53% in regional areas, and 64% in metropolitan areas have access.

The level of broadband access is much higher among general internet users, with three quarters (74%) reporting that they have broadband, compared with 57% in 2006.
Growth in broadband connectivity is likely to continue, with a quarter (25%) of people currently without broadband indicating they intend having it connected within the next 12 months.

### 2.3.2 Use of newer communication technologies

All respondents were asked about their use of newer communication technologies. More than four in five (82%) people undertake at least one of these activities at least monthly. The most common activities are:

- Email, used by 75%
- SMS, used by 57%
- News feeds (RSS), used by 39%
- Instant Messaging\(^3\), used by 27%.

There is a strong correlation between use of newer communication technologies and age, with nearly all those under 35 involved in some form of activity at least once a month. This declines to 49% for those 65 or older.

**Figure 12 Use of newer communication technologies**

QD1. Do you do any of the following online activities at least monthly?
Base: All respondents (n=4016)
Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% as respondents could nominate more than one activity.

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3 Instant Messaging (IM) – real time communication between two or more people over the internet.
Why People Choose a Service Delivery Channel to Contact Government
three Why People Choose a Service Delivery Channel to Contact Government

Overview

Convenience is a prime motivator for use of e-government channels.

- The core factors motivating internet use, convenience and time savings, have been stable since 2004–05. Specific reasons include being able to make contact at a time that suits and to avoid queues or having to wait for information or forms to be sent out. The internet is seen as requiring less time than mail or in-person contact.

- The main reasons for using the telephone are similar. It enables contact at a time that suits and saves time compared with in-person and mail contact. The speed and convenience of automated telephone systems are viewed positively. The advantages offered by the telephone in personal interaction are also important, particularly the capacity to speak to a ‘real’ person and the opportunity to explain and clarify issues. There has been little variation in these attitudes since 2004–05.

The main motivators for contacting government in-person or by mail relate to opportunity and lack of choice and the advantages of face-to-face interaction.

- While convenience issues are also important for those contacting government in person or by mail, other issues are more important motivators for use of these service delivery channels.

- The lack of an alternative is a significant reason why people make contact in person, as is the opportunity provided by personal interaction to clarify and explain issues, to ask questions and get an immediate response.

- For mail users, the convenience of being able to undertake a transaction at a time that suited them is important, but the unavailability of an online option or a need to receive or send documents and forms were also perceived to be important.

Encouraging greater use of e-government services.

- Over three in four (79%) people indicated that they could be encouraged to increase their use of the internet to contact government.

- Just over half (55%) of those who are not internet users at all could be encouraged to start using this service delivery channel.

- Those who currently use the internet to contact government would be encouraged to increase their use mainly by improvements in content and infrastructure, including faster loading websites and more reliable and faster internet connections.

- Those who are not internet users are more likely to be encouraged to start with improvements in their general internet and computer skills, and with better access to the internet.
3.1 Introduction

The factors influencing choice of service delivery channel can be broadly classified under three themes:

- convenience
- channel features (characteristics and qualities associated with this means of communication)
- availability (another channel is not possible or available).

The relative importance of each factor varies by channel:

- **Internet**—The prime motivator for use of the internet is convenience, with four in five (80%) internet users mentioning some aspect of this as a reason for using the internet to contact government. Features of the internet are also an important factor, motivating one in four (26%) users.

- **Telephone**—Convenience is also an important motivator for half (50%) of telephone users. In addition, the specific features of telephone contact are a motivator for two in five (40%), particularly the capacity for personal interaction. There was also a small group (13%) who felt they had no choice but to select this channel.

- **In person**—Availability issues (35%) and the characteristics (34%) associated with this means of contacting government were the main motivators for these users. A third (32%) felt they had no choice but to contact government this way. Convenience (29%) is a relatively less important motivator for those making contact in person, compared with internet and telephone users.

- **Mail**—Relatively few people use the mail. Two in five (44%) of those who did use this service delivery channel did so because they felt they had no choice. One in four felt it offered convenience (25%) and features of the channel were nominated by 23% of mail users.

**Figure 13  Factors influencing choice of channel**

![Bar chart showing factors influencing choice of channel]

Q6. Still thinking of this most recent contact, why did you do it by…..? Why else? Anything else?
Base: Those who made contact by internet (n=1112); telephone (n=1286); in-person (n=1565); mail (n=372)
Note: Responses add up to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one reason why they use a service delivery channel.
3.2 The internet

Convenience issues and to a lesser extent, features of the internet, are the broad motivators for those whose most recent contact with government was by internet.

Although use of the internet to contact government has increased over time, the core factors motivating its use, as illustrated in Figure 14, have generally not changed. The relative importance of specific motivators has also been stable from 2004–05 to 2007.

Convenience—Four in five (80%) of those who had used the internet for their most recent contact with government mentioned at least one aspect of convenience as a reason for doing so:

- One in three (36%) internet users reported using the internet because they can do it at a time that suits.
- A similar proportion (35%) mentioned using the internet because it required a shorter time compared with the mail or in-person contact.
- One in ten (11%) used the internet to avoid waiting in queues.
- Similar proportions accessed government by internet to avoid waiting to be sent information or forms (8%), or having to go into a government office (7%).

Features of the internet—Twenty-six per cent mentioned at least one feature of the channel as a reason for contacting government by internet:

- The ability to control the information (6%), its detail (2%) and being able to see (2%) the information is an attraction to these internet users.
- Not having to make telephone calls (5%) is also an attractive feature.

Focus group participants who use the internet frequently to contact government reinforced these positive aspects of the internet, and clearly saw it as a very convenient way to communicate with government.

“Well we have a whole lot of ways of accessing (government) … but with the internet I can do it when I want and I don’t have to take a huge chunk out of my day which of course I used to resent. I would have to go to Centrelink about say a parenting thing or a benefit and you would go in and queue up and muck around for three hours or so or you might be on the phone for half a day to try and deal with it, but now it’s so much better and faster.’

‘The information is all there and rather than getting on the phone, or even going in, and having to say well put me on to such and such and then they say no you need to talk to so and so … but then you find so and so has just gone out or something … the internet is terrific its all there in the same place every time.’
Figure 14  Most common reasons for making contact by the internet

Q6C. *Still thinking of this most recent contact, why did you do it by internet?*
Base: Those who made contact by internet (n=1112)

Note 1: Respondents were able to give multiple reasons for making contact by the internet.

Note 2: Only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.
3.3 The telephone

Convenience, and features of the telephone as a service delivery channel, are the broad motivators for using the telephone to contact government. Lack of access to alternative options also impacts on choice for some telephone users.

While there have been slight shifts in the relative importance of specific reasons for using the telephone, the importance of these general motivators has been constant since 2004–05.

Convenience—Half (50%) of those who used the telephone to access government mentioned at least one convenience issue as a reason for doing so. The principal reasons were:

- a convenient access time, for one in four (26%)
- requiring a shorter time, for one in five (21%).

Channel features—Two in five (40%) mentioned at least one feature of the channel as a reason for using the telephone to contact government:

- For almost one in five (16%) the telephone enabled them to talk to a ‘real person’.
- One in ten (11%) did so because it enabled them to clarify and explain things to get the results required.
- One in ten (11%) used it for the convenience of the automated telephone systems.
- For 7% of telephone users, the telephone provided an opportunity to ask questions and get immediate answers.

Availability—Thirteen per cent contacted government by telephone because another channel was not possible or available. Specifically, 7% used the telephone because the transaction could not be undertaken over the internet.

Focus group participants discussed why they found the telephone convenient—particularly when the phone had a well designed menu system

‘the phone is great … anything is better then queuing up for ages … and I love it when you get the options so with a couple of buttons I am straight onto the person who knows what I am after.’

and the advantages of the personal nature of the telephone.

‘If I deal with them all the time I am happy to send an email and you can even have a short conversation with an email, but if I want to get something across or I want to let them know I am happy or unhappy its still a people thing you know the response to a phone conversation and you can fix it if needs be but an email you don’t know the outcome or the reaction.’
Q6A. Still thinking of this most recent contact, why did you do it by telephone?
Base: Those who made contact by telephone (n=1286)
Note 1: Respondents were able to give multiple reasons for making contact by telephone.
Note 2: Only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.
3.4 In-person contact

The specific features associated with this service delivery channel, the availability of other channels and convenience issues are relatively similar in level of importance as broad motivators for in-person contact.

Although the proportion of people who report they had no choice but to make contact in person has declined since 2004–05, other reasons for making contact in person have been relatively similar over the three years of this series of studies.

The most frequently reported reasons for in-person contact are:

Availability—A third (35%) mentioned at least one availability issue as a reason for contacting government in person. Twenty nine per cent of in-person contacts could not be undertaken using any other service delivery channel.

Features of the channel—A third (34%) mentioned at least one feature of the channel as a reason for contacting government in person:

- Fifteen per cent of those who had used in-person contact had chosen to do so because of a preference to speak to a ‘real person’.
- In-person contact provided the opportunity to ask questions and get answers for 6% of these users, and, for 11% the opportunity to clarify and explain what they wanted.

Convenience—Three in ten (29%) of those contacting government in person mentioned at least one convenience issue as a reason for doing so. Specifically:

- One in five (19%) used in-person contact because it enabled contact at a time that suited.
- A small group (6%) did so because it meant they did not have to wait for information or forms to be sent to them, while 6% reported they had made contact in person because the government office was close by, or they were in the area.
Q6E. Still thinking of this most recent contact, why did you do it IN PERSON? Why else? Anything else?

Base: Those who made contact in person (n=1565)

Note 1: Respondents were able to give multiple reasons for making contact in person.

Note 2: Only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.
3.5 Mail

One in ten (10%) used the mail for their most recent contact with government. This continues to be the least used means of contact and the motivations for using it have changed little over the three years of this series of studies. Issues associated with the availability of other service delivery channels are the principal motivator, but convenience and features of the channel are also of importance.

**Availability**—Just over two in five (44%) mentioned at least one aspect of this theme. Specifically:

- One in five (19%) reported they had used mail because there was either no other way of contacting government, or the transaction could not be done online.
- A similar proportion (15%) reported that a form had been sent to them.
- A further 6% reported that there was no other choice.

**Convenience**—A quarter (25%) mentioned at least one aspect of convenience. One in five (18%) did so because it allowed contact at their convenience.

**Features of the channel**—A quarter (23%) mentioned a characteristic or quality associated with this form of communication, such as not having to go into a government office or needing a computer.
**Q6D. Still thinking of this most recent contact, why did you do it BY MAIL? Why else? Anything else?**

Base: All those who used mail (n=372)

Note 1: Respondents were able to give multiple reasons for making contact by mail.

Note 2: Only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No other way available/can't do online</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can do it at time that suits me</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form sent to me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn't have to go into government office</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to sign form</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy/Convenient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheaper</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not familiar with internet</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't have to wait in queue</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have always done it that way/Habit</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 17  Most common reasons for making contact by mail**
3.6 Encouraging greater use of the internet to contact government

Three in four (73%) people indicated they could be encouraged to start using the internet to contact government or to increase their use. The factors that would encourage an overall increase in internet use are:

- **Website usability** improvements, mentioned by one in four (27%); specifically, better layout, navigation, making government websites easier to find, and better search facilities.
- **Website content** improvements would encourage greater use by over one in ten (12%) people. These include up to date websites, containing complete and appropriate material, with more detailed and concise information with greater depth and quality.
- **Infrastructure** improvements such as faster loading websites and more reliable internet connections would encourage greater use for 10%.
- **Better access** would encourage greater use by nearly one in ten (8%), particularly improved availability of internet through better access at home, school, libraries and work.
- **Increased awareness** about what could be done online or better familiarity with using the internet or computers in general would encourage increased use for 8%.
- Addressing **privacy and security** concerns when transferring information using the internet, including credit card details, and improved personal privacy protection would also encourage increased internet use for contacting government for 6%.

There are differences in attitude between those who use the internet (although not necessarily to contact government), and those who do not use the internet at all.

- Current users of the internet are more likely to be encouraged to increase their use with improvements to the usability of government websites (32%) and to their content (15%).
- Just over half (55%) of those who are not internet users indicated they could be encouraged to start using it to contact government. In particular, they would be encouraged by improvements in their skill base (19%) and improved access (19%).
### Figure 18  Factors that would encourage greater use of the internet to contact government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet User?</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No/Can’t say %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the internet</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Areas to be addressed

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No/Can’t say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usability</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security/privacy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q13. What, if anything, would encourage you to use the internet more often for accessing or communicating with government services? What else? Anything else?

Base: All contacts (n=4016)

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% as respondents were able to provide more than one factor that would encourage increased use of internet to contact government.
Figure 19  Preferred means of contacting government—what would encourage increased internet use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred channel of contact with government</th>
<th>Telephone %</th>
<th>Internet %</th>
<th>Mail %</th>
<th>In person %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of people who preferred this channel</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas to be addressed for each group</th>
<th>Usability</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Security/privacy</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Nothing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usability</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security/privacy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q13. What, if anything, would encourage you to use the Internet more often for accessing or communicating with government services? What else? Anything else?
Base: All contacts (n=4016)
Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% as respondents were able to provide more than one factor that would encourage increased use of the internet to contact government.
four Why People do not Use e-Government Services
four  Why People do not Use e-Government Services

Overview

- There has been little change since 2004–05 in the main reasons for not using e-government (internet or telephone) channels: a preference or need for direct contact with a ‘real person’ or the unavailability of an e-government channel.
- People who are internet users did not use it for their last contact with government in 2007 for the following reasons:
  - a preference for dealing with a ‘real’ person (16%)
  - a belief that contact had to be in person (13%), a lack of awareness of an online option or a belief that the contact could not be done online (13%)
  - a further 9% did not know if the task could be done online, or had website navigation difficulties (6%).
- A requirement for in-person contact was the most significant reason (26%) why those who did not use the internet for their last contact with government did not use the telephone to do so either.

4.1 Introduction

To understand why people do not use e-government services to contact government, respondents whose last type of contact with government excluded the internet or telephone were asked about their reasons for not choosing either of these channels.

4.2 Why people who are internet users did not use it to contact government

The main reasons why people who are internet users did not use the internet to contact government can be summarised under the following broad themes (in which there has been relatively little change since 2004–05):

Features of other service delivery channels—Forty-four per cent mentioned at least one feature related to other service delivery channels as a reason for not using the internet. Specific reasons included:

- preference for speaking to or meeting a ‘real’ person (16%)
- contact was only possible in person (13%)
- an online option was not available or possible (13%).
Access—Thirteen per cent mentioned access issues such as lack of familiarity with using the internet.

Infrastructure—Eleven per cent mentioned infrastructure issues such as a slow website connection, website crashes and unreliable connections.

Awareness—Ten per cent mentioned awareness issues, the most significant of which was being unaware whether the task could be done online.

Usability—Eight per cent mentioned usability issues. Six per cent specifically mentioned website navigation difficulties.

Figure 20 Main reasons for internet users not using the internet to contact government

Q7A. Still thinking of this most recent contact (apart from reasons you just mentioned) why didn’t you do it on the internet? Why else? Anything else?

Base: Internet users who did not use the internet to contact government (n=2036)

Note: Respondents were able to give more than one reason.
4.3 Potential for growth in internet use

Seven in ten (71%) people did not use the internet for their last contact with government.

A large proportion of those who did not do so do, however, use the internet for other purposes. The proportions that also use the internet for other reasons are:
- three quarters (74%) of those who last used the telephone to contact government
- seventy-three per cent of those whose last contact was by mail
- seventy per cent of those who made in-person contact.

While not all contact with government can be conducted through the internet, this suggests that considerable potential remains for growth in use of the internet to contact government.

Focus group participants raised concerns about the impact of an increasing, and as they generally saw it, inevitable dependency on the internet to communicate with government. In particular they raised issues about the impact on two groups:
- aged people
  ‘They have to understand that there’s no barrier to using the internet because you are old, but maybe there is a barrier in the way some web pages are designed, in the type they use and the size of the type and that sort of thing... if they don’t understand that the future will be a disaster.’
- and rural communities.
  ‘... we all complain about the local offices ... all the stories about public servants and getting the run around and so on, but the truth is they are part of the local community and they understand us and what a problem means locally. If they get replaced basically by a website it might be faster and more convenient but the local touch is gone.’
FOUR WHY PEOPLE DO NOT USE E-GOVERNMENT SERVICES

4.4 The telephone

Approximately seven in ten people (68%) do not use the telephone to contact government. The main reasons for not using the telephone, among those who did not use e-government channels (internet and telephone) to contact government, can be summarised under three themes:

Features of other channels—Four in ten (39%) mentioned at least one issue related to choice of another channel as a reason for not using the telephone to contact government.

- One in four (26%) did not use the telephone because contact was only possible in person.
- Close to one in ten (8%) did not do so because a government office was close-by or because it was easier to do things over the counter.

Q7A. Still thinking of this most recent contact (apart from reasons you just mentioned) why didn’t you do it on the internet? Why else? Anything else?

Base: Internet users who did not use the internet to contact government (n=2036)

*Note 1: In 2004–05 the response to the code as ‘not applicable – can only do it in forms’.
*Note 2: Respondents were able to give more than one answer. They may have given multiple reasons within one theme or may have given more than one theme.
*Note 3: Only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.
**Infrastructure availability**—One in four (24%) mentioned at least one infrastructure issue as a reason for not using the telephone to contact government.
- For 15% a telephone option was unavailable or contact was not possible by telephone.
- Five per cent did not use the telephone because of delays in getting through.

**Usability**—Close to one in five (17%) mentioned at least one usability issue as a reason for not using the telephone to contact government.
- One in ten (12%) chose not to use the telephone because they had difficulty or disliked using an automated telephone system (7%), or had difficulty in navigating a telephone menu (5%).

**Figure 22** Main reasons why those who did not use the internet to contact government did not use the telephone to do so either

![Bar chart showing reasons for not using the telephone](chart)

*Q7B. Still thinking of this most recent contact (apart from reasons you just mentioned) why didn’t you do it by phone? Why else? Anything else?*

Base: Telephone non-users who also did not use the internet (n=536)

Note: Only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.
The reasons for not using the telephone by this group have seen little significant change since 2004–05.

The exception to this is where the reason for not using the telephone was because contact was only possible in person. This reason was cited by 26% in both 2007 and 2006 but was reported by only 2% in 2004–05. Two points should be noted about this result:

- Responses in 2004–05 and 2006 were categorised as ‘not possible due to having to show or sign supporting documents’ whereas 2007 responses were categorised as ‘this contact is only possible in person’.
- The 2006 report noted that the differences between 2006 and 2004–05 may be due to variations in interpretation of open-ended responses and should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 23 Reasons why those who did not use the internet to contact government did not use the telephone to do so either 2005–2007

Q7B. Still thinking of this most recent contact (apart from reasons you just mentioned) why didn’t you do it by phone? Why else? Anything else?

Base: Telephone non-users who also did not use the internet (n=536)

Note 1: Respondents were able to give more than one answer. They may have given multiple reasons within one theme or may have given more than one theme as a reason for making contact by telephone.

Note 2: Only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.
five Satisfaction with Service Delivery
Overview

Satisfaction
- Overall satisfaction with achieving an outcome when dealing with government is high, with nine in ten (89%) people satisfied, a rating consistent with 2006 (88%).
- Similar ratings were achieved for ease of using the service (92%) and with the ease of finding the information sought (90%).
- People are less satisfied, however, with the amount of time it took to receive a reply to an enquiry (84%), a result also consistent with previous studies.

Dissatisfaction
- Dissatisfaction with government contact is relatively low.
- The most common cause of dissatisfaction is the length of time taken to receive a reply. Fourteen per cent of those who were expecting a reply were dissatisfied with the length of time taken.
- The level of dissatisfaction varies depending on the service delivery channel used:
  - Internet users were less likely to be dissatisfied than anyone else, whereas telephone users are consistently the most likely to be dissatisfied.
  - The most problematic issue for telephone users is time spent waiting for a reply (18%) and to a lesser extent, the outcome of their contact (12%).

5.1 Introduction

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their most recent contact with government on a five point scale ranging from ‘extremely satisfied’ to ‘not satisfied at all’.

Satisfaction was rated in terms of:
- the outcome
- how long they had to wait for a reply to their enquiry
- the ease of finding the information or service they sought
- the ease of using the service.

For the purpose of this report, a person is regarded as ‘satisfied’ if they gave a score of either ‘extremely satisfied’, ‘very satisfied’ or ‘somewhat satisfied’. Alternatively, a person is ‘dissatisfied’ if they answered ‘not very’ or ‘not at all’ satisfied. Those who said they were not satisfied with at least one aspect of the service were asked why they were not satisfied.
Respondents were also asked to rate the extent to which they achieved what they intended. This rating was based on an eleven point scale where ‘0’ meant that they did not achieve any of what they intended and ‘10’ meant that they achieved exactly what they intended.

5.2 Satisfaction

Overall, most people are satisfied with the level of service they receive:
- Ninety-two per cent of people are satisfied with the ease of using the service.
- Ninety per cent of people are satisfied with the ease of finding information.
- Eighty-nine per cent of people are satisfied with the outcome of the service.
- People are most dissatisfied with the length of time it takes to receive a reply, with satisfaction levels dropping to 84%.

Figure 24 Satisfaction with services received

Q9B: How satisfied were you with …
Base: Those with most recent contact with government (n=3994)
Note 1: Satisfaction with outcome was asked slightly differently in 2004–05 when respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with the extent that they achieved what they intended. In 2006 and 2007 they were asked their level of satisfaction with the outcome.
Note 2: Percentages do not add up to 100% as some respondents were not able to say if they were satisfied or dissatisfied.

5.2.1 Achieving an outcome

The overall rating for achieving the intended outcome is very high, with an average rating of 8.6, the same average score as in 2006. There is little variation when using different service delivery channels, when dealing with different levels of government or with different types of transaction.

Scores are similar across all channels used to contact government (telephone, 8.3; internet, 8.9; mail, 8.5; in person, 8.7). This profile closely mirrors the 2006 results.
Figure 25  Average ratings of achieving intended outcome by channel

Q9A. I would like you to rate the extent that you achieved what you intended, with 0 meaning that you DIDN’T ACHIEVE any of what you intended, through to 10 meaning that you ACHIEVED EXACTLY what you intended with that contact.

Base: Most recent contact with government using telephone (n=1137); internet (n=990); mail (n=298), in-person (n=1480)

Those who made or received a payment received the highest average rating at 9.2, compared with those who sought information (8.3), provided information (8.6), and exchanged information (8.6).

Figure 26  Average ratings of achieving intended outcome by type of transaction

Q9A. I would like you to rate the extent that you achieved what you intended, with 0 meaning that you DIDN’T ACHIEVE any of what you intended, through to 10 meaning that you ACHIEVED EXACTLY what you intended with that contact.

Base: Most recent contact with government and type of transaction: sought information (n=1063); provided information (n=742); exchanged information (n=1350); made/received payment (n=819)
Consistent with these high achievement ratings is a high level of overall satisfaction. Nine in ten (89%) of those contacting government were satisfied, as was the case in 2006 (88%).

There are some slight differences in the satisfaction scores for different channels used to contact government, with contact by internet (93%), in person (90%) and telephone (87%) being a more satisfactory experience than those using mail (82%).

**Figure 27  Satisfaction with outcome by channel**

There were marginal differences in satisfaction ratings depending on the type of transaction. Over nine in ten (93%) of those who made or received a payment were satisfied with the outcome of their most recent contact. Satisfaction levels for the other types of transactions are similar with those seeking or obtaining information (88%), exchanging information (89%), and providing information (87%).

*Q9B. How satisfied were you with the outcome? Would you say...?*

Base: Most recent contact using telephone (n=1137), internet (n=990), mail (n=298), in-person (n=1480)

Note 1: Satisfaction with outcome was asked slightly differently in 2004–05 when respondents were asked their level of satisfaction with the extent that they achieved what they intended. In 2006 and 2007 they were asked their level of satisfaction with the outcome.

Note 2: Data for the mail and in-person channels is not available for 2004–05.
The level of government contacted makes little difference to the levels of satisfaction. Nine in ten (90%) of those contacting the Australian Government were satisfied with the outcome, a similar level of satisfaction to those dealing with state and territory government (89%) and local government (87%).
Figure 29 Satisfaction with level of government contacted

Q9B. How satisfied were you with the outcome? Would you say...?
Base: Those with most recent contact with Australian Government (n=1657); state and territory government (n=1116); local government (n=1143)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government Type</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
<th>Not Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Not Satisfied at All</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Can't Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and territory governments</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.2 Waiting for a reply

Although overall satisfaction scores with the length of time for reply are the lowest, they have increased to 84% from 76% in 2006.

The level of satisfaction with the time taken for a reply varies with the channel used to contact government. Nine in ten (91%) internet users are satisfied with the time taken for a reply, while those using telephone (81%), in-person (83%), or mail (79%) contact are less likely to be satisfied.

Figure 30 Satisfaction with length of wait for reply by channel

Q9C. How satisfied were you with... how long you had to wait for a reply to your inquiry?

Base: Most recent contact with government using the telephone (n=1040); internet (n=758); mail (n=249), in person (n=1294)

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
There is little difference in the levels of satisfaction with the length of time taken for a reply between levels of government:

**Figure 31  Satisfaction with length of wait for reply by level of government**

*Q9C. How satisfied were you with... how long you had to wait for a reply to your inquiry?*

Base: Most recent contact with the Australian Government (n=1434); state and territory government (n=968); local government (n=950)

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
Satisfaction levels varied depending on the type of transaction, with those who made or received a payment (87%) or sought or obtained information (86%) more likely to be satisfied than those exchanging (82%) or providing (79%) information.

**Figure 32  Satisfaction with length of wait for reply by type of transaction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Transaction</th>
<th>Extremely satisfied</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Some what satisfied</th>
<th>Not satisfied at all</th>
<th>Not very satisfied</th>
<th>Can’t say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sought or Obtained information</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided information</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchanged information</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made or received payment</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q9C. How satisfied were you with... how long you had to wait for a reply to your inquiry?  
Base: Most recent contact with government and sought information (n=883), provided information (n=651), exchanged information (n=1215), made or received payment (n=655)  
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.

### 5.2.3 Finding specific information

Nine in ten (90%) of those who used government services were satisfied with the ease of finding specific information, a similar result to 2006 (88%).

There are slight differences in the levels of satisfaction with ease of finding specific information between different channels used to contact government, with internet users the most satisfied (92%) and mail users the least satisfied (84%).
Focus group participants generally had a common expectation that when their communication involved direct contact with a person, that is telephone or in person, the extent to which the outcome would be satisfactory was very much influenced by how the organisation’s representative treated them—no matter the outcome.

‘If you are dealing face to face you get a better response ... generally people are polite and want to help. While there are always exceptions, they treat you well and know what they are on about ... you are less likely to be misinterpreted and more likely to understand what is happening ... so even if you don’t get what you want you know someone tried to help and maybe you know what to do next time or (your) options.’

When there is no direct contact with a person, satisfaction is far more likely to be influenced by a positive outcome—the strength of that satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, is strongly driven by the quality and effectiveness of the process.

‘Some [websites] can be difficult to negotiate ... if there is too much information or you can’t understand what to do, you are never going to get a positive result ... the information must be there but how do I get it and I can’t even tell how else to find out ... they don’t give a [phone] number, if I could speak to someone I would then know what to do ... you have to send an email but who is going to answer it and I am not even sure what to ask.’
There is no difference in satisfaction in level of government contacted.

**Figure 34. Satisfaction with ease of finding specific information by level of government**

- **Australian Government**
  - Extremely satisfied: 20%
  - Very satisfied: 46%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 22%
  - Not very satisfied: 5%
  - Not satisfied at all: 3%
  - Can't say: 3%

- **State and territory governments**
  - Extremely satisfied: 23%
  - Very satisfied: 45%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 22%
  - Not very satisfied: 4%
  - Not satisfied at all: 3%
  - Can't say: 2%

- **Local government**
  - Extremely satisfied: 22%
  - Very satisfied: 51%
  - Somewhat satisfied: 18%
  - Not very satisfied: 3%
  - Not satisfied at all: 2%
  - Can't say: 3%

**Q9D. How satisfied were you with... the ease of finding the specific information or service you were after?**

*Base: Most recent contact with the Australian Government (n=1657); state and territory government (n=1116); local government (n=1143)*

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.*

The general perception of focus group participants was that state, territory, and Australian Government agencies tend to be large and bureaucratic; local government is smaller and more personal, but at times more autocratic. This perception was influenced by where participants lived.

Those living in rural and regional communities had a stronger affinity with the local government—it is part of the community and they probably know someone who works there.

‘There’s local knowledge … local interest. The local government has invested more in its locality. So there is a more genuine feet on the ground… they are just a little more personal which makes an enormous difference to the way they deliver their services.’

State and territory government had little distinction from the Australian Government for some regional participants.

‘I just don’t know what the difference is, state and Australian Government. I mean I get on the internet and deal with lots of government departments, so how do I know which one is state and which one is federal? I know they are different but I don’t know which is which.’

Metropolitan participants generally had less to do with local government and had greater familiarity with the services and processes of the Australian and state or territory governments.
The type of transaction, however, does have some impact on overall satisfaction levels; with those making or receiving a payment (93%) the most satisfied, followed by those exchanging information (90%), seeking or obtaining information (89%) and providing information (87%).

**Figure 35  Satisfaction with ease of finding specific information by type of transaction**

Q9D. How satisfied were you with... the ease of finding the specific information or service you were after?

Base: Most recent contact with government and sought information (n=1063), provided information (n=742), exchanged information (n=1350), made or received payment (n=819)

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
5.2.4 Ease of using the service

More than nine in ten (92%) people who contacted government are satisfied with the ease of using the service – a similar level of satisfaction to 2006 (91%).

The channel used to contact government had little impact on satisfaction with ease of using the service, although nearly all of those using the internet to contact government (96%) were satisfied.

Figure 36 Satisfaction with ease of using the service by channel

Q9E. How satisfied were you with the ease of using the service?
Base: Most recent contact using telephone (n=1137); internet (n=990); mail (n=298); in-person (n=1480)
The level of government contacted had little impact on satisfaction levels with ease of using the service. Similarly, the type of transaction had minimal impact on satisfaction levels.

**Figure 37  Satisfaction with ease of using the service by level of government contacted**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Government</th>
<th>Extremely Satisfied</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat Satisfied</th>
<th>Not Satisfied at All</th>
<th>Not very Satisfied</th>
<th>Don’t Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Government</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and territory governments</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q9E. How satisfied were you with... the ease of using the service?
Base: Those with most recent contact with the Australian Government (n=1657); state and territory government (n=1116); local government (n=143)
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.

There was a general perception in the focus groups that government, particularly at the local and state and territory levels, is very different to deal with compared with non-government organisations. The drivers are the same but overall expectations are lower—it is generally assumed that you are more likely to be dissatisfied when dealing with a government agency.

‘When you are dealing with bureaucracy they often forget they are public servants they forget the servant bit and quite often they treat you like – they know they’ve got a monopoly so like it or lump it.’

At the same time, however, there is also a wide acknowledgement that dealing with a government agency can work very well and result in a very satisfactory outcome.

‘But when you get someone who is genuine in their job and wants to do a good job and provide service well you get a good service ... when it works its better than anywhere.’
There was also a broad acknowledgement that government agencies are increasingly aware of providing better services and that service delivery has greatly improved.

‘I’ve noticed that [large Australian Government agency] in the past going like they just want to get you out of there … I didn’t like any part of dealing with them at all. Now they have someone at the front desk who points you in the right direction and has a bit of a chat and all the people behind the desk are friendly... understand your time is important and they don’t just say what do you want.’

Figure 38  Satisfaction with ease of using the service by type of transaction

Q9D. How satisfied were you with... the ease of using the service?

Base: Most recent contact with government and sought information (n=1063), provided information (n=742), exchanged information (n=1350), made or received payment (n=819)

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
5.3 Dissatisfaction

5.3.1 Introduction

Dissatisfaction with government contact is relatively low, with less than one in ten people indicating dissatisfaction with the outcome of:

- their contact with government (9%)
- the ease of using the service (7%)
- finding information (7%).

The highest cause of dissatisfaction is in the length of time taken to receive a reply. Fourteen per cent of those who were expecting a reply were dissatisfied with the length of time it took. This is a significant increase from the 2006 level of 6%, and has occurred despite an increase in the overall satisfaction levels for ‘time taken for a reply’ from 76% in 2006 to 84%.

The level of dissatisfaction varies depending on the service delivery channel used. Internet users are less likely to be dissatisfied than anyone else, whereas telephone users are consistently the most likely to be dissatisfied. The most problematic issue for telephone users is time spent waiting for a reply (18%) and to a lesser extent, the outcome of their contact (12%). These issues are also the main reason for dissatisfaction for those who contacted government in person.

5.3.2 Overall reasons for dissatisfaction

The main reasons for overall dissatisfaction with contact with government are customer service and usability related.

Customer service—Three in five (61%) of all people who were dissatisfied with their most recent contact with government mentioned at least one customer service issue as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Specifically:

- A third of those who were dissatisfied (36%) felt that they had to wait too long to be served.
- One in ten (10%) believed they were given incorrect advice.
- One in ten (10%) felt that the person they dealt with did not understand the issue, or their issue was not resolved.
- In 7% of cases the person was transferred too many times.

Usability—One in five (21%) mentioned at least one usability issue as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Not being able to talk to a ‘real person’ or having to make contact using an automated answering facility caused dissatisfaction for 6%; a further 4% found the automated menu too complicated.
Focus group participants mentioned a broad range of issues, mainly customer service related, that contribute towards a satisfactory experience when dealing with an organisation. Key satisfaction drivers identified were:

- Courteous and responsive staff
- Knowledgeable staff
- Fast and efficient service
- Meeting commitments and keeping promises.

Dissatisfaction is not simply the opposite of the satisfactory experience. While the way staff treat an individual can result in a very negative experience, there are a number of process driven issues that can also drive dissatisfaction:

- Difficulty in accessing an organisation or finding the appropriate person
- Inappropriate information or no information or help available
- Inefficient processes and systems
- Non-response
- Poor communication.

5.3.3 Dissatisfaction with the internet

Those whose most recent contact with government had been by internet are the least likely to be dissatisfied, with less than one in ten (7%) reporting dissatisfaction. There has been no statistically significant change in the reasons for dissatisfaction since 2006. It should be noted that relatively few of those who last contacted government by internet were dissatisfied (N=120); results should therefore be regarded as indicative estimates only and interpreted with caution.

The main reasons for dissatisfaction are usability, customer service and content related:

**Usability**—A third (36%) of those dissatisfied with contact by internet mentioned at least one usability issue as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Specific issues experienced include website navigation difficulties and complicated menus.

**Customer service**—A third (33%) mentioned at least one customer service issue as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Specifically, one in ten (12%) felt they had obtained incorrect advice.

**Content**—Just over one in ten (12%) mentioned at least one content issue as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Specifically, one in ten was dissatisfied with the quality of the information: 6% found that the information they were seeking was not there, 5% found the information to be incomplete.
5.3.4 Dissatisfaction with the telephone

One in ten (9%) of those whose most recent contact with government had been by telephone were dissatisfied with the experience. This dissatisfaction is also related to customer service and usability issues. There has been no change in the relative frequency of these causes of dissatisfaction since 2004–05.

Customer service—Sixty nine per cent mentioned at least one customer service issue as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Specifically:

- Forty per cent had to wait too long for an answer. Getting transferred too many times was experienced by 13%.
- Nine per cent were given incorrect advice and 8% did not think the person understood the issue.

Usability—Twenty six per cent mentioned at least one usability issue as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Specifically, eleven per cent could not talk to a person and had to make the contact through an automated answering service, while 7% found the automated menu was too complicated.

5.3.5 Dissatisfaction with in-person contact

Less than one in ten (8%) of those who had made contact in person were dissatisfied with this process. The main reasons for dissatisfaction are customer service related and have not changed since 2006. The time spent waiting for a reply is the main issue (for 41%), while 11% believed they were given incorrect advice, and a further 8% did not think the person understood the issue.

5.3.6 Dissatisfaction with mail contact

The number of people expressing dissatisfaction with mail contact was too small for meaningful statistical analysis of the reasons for this dissatisfaction.

Figure 39 Dissatisfaction by service delivery channel used to contact government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telephone %</th>
<th>Internet %</th>
<th>Mail %</th>
<th>In-Person %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction with outcome</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction – wait for reply*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction – ease of finding specific information</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfaction – ease of using service</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q9B-D. How satisfied were you with…..
Base: Most recent contact with telephone (n=1137); internet (n=990); mail (n=298); in-person (n=1480)

*Base: Excludes where no reply was required: Most recent contact with government using telephone (n=1040); internet (n=758); mail (n=249); in-person (n=1294).
six Preferences for Future Use of e-Government Services
six Preferences for Future Use of e-Government Services

Overview

- There is a very strong preference, given a choice, for e-government services.

The internet is now the preferred way to contact government.

- Two in five (41%) people would now prefer to contact government by internet. This is a substantial increase from 2004–05 when less than a third (31%) nominated the internet as their preference.
- At the same time, there has been an ongoing decline in preference for in-person contact, which has fallen from 33% in 2004–05 to 20% in 2007.
- Preference for the telephone has remained relatively stable over this time.
- There is a very strong preference, given a choice, for e-government (telephone and internet) services. Those who use in-person contact are the least likely to prefer to use an e-government channel, nevertheless the majority (59%) would still prefer to do so.

Preference for a particular service delivery channel is influenced by the reason for the contact, age and location.

- Preference for the internet is considerably higher than for all other channels when seeking information. The internet and telephone are relatively equally preferred for other transactions. Preference for in-person contact is lower for all categories of transactions, but highest for making or receiving payments.
- There is a strong linear relationship between age and preferred way of contacting government. The younger the person, the more likely they are to prefer the internet, while the older the person, the more likely their preference is to be for telephone, and to a lesser extent, in-person contact.
- Those living in a metropolitan area (45%) are more likely to prefer to use the internet to contact government than residents of regional (34%) and remote/rural (29%) locations.

6.1 Introduction

The majority of people would prefer to use an e-government service delivery channel to contact government: either the internet (41%) or the telephone (33%).

The internet is now the most preferred way of contacting government; preference for in-person contact has declined to the point where twice as many people (41%) would prefer to use the internet as would prefer to make contact in person (20%).

This is a marked change in preference from 2004–05 where preferences were relatively equally divided between in-person contact (33%), telephone (28%) and the internet (31%).
If you could access government services by telephone, over the internet, by mail, in-person, or by some other method, what would be your preferred way of doing it?

Base: All respondents (n=4016)

Note: Percentages do not add up to exactly 100% because of other responses given by respondents including fax, mobile phone, SMS, using the mobile to access the internet (3G third generation wireless networks), 'it depends on the situation', 'direct debit', 'some other method', and 'refused/can't say'. The proportion of responses covered by these responses are approximately 2% in 2004–05, 4% in 2006 and 3% in 2007.

Preferences do not always reflect actual behaviour. More people would prefer to use the internet to contact government than actually did so. In 2007, only seven in ten (70%) of those who would prefer their contact to be via internet actually used that channel. This ratio of preference to actual use has been similar across the three years of these studies.

Thinking of this most recent contact, did you do this...?

Q1. If you could access government services by telephone, over the internet, by mail, in-person, or by some other method, what would be your preferred way of doing it?

Base: All respondents (n=4016)
The main reasons why those who would have preferred to use the internet to contact government did not do so include:

- the option was not available or it was not possible to undertake the transaction by internet (19%)
- contact had to be with a person (18%)
- preference for speaking to a ‘real’ person (12%)
- lack of awareness that it was an option (10%).

While the number of people who would prefer to use the internet to contact government is higher than the actual number of people who do so, the situation is reversed for in-person contact. Thirty seven per cent of people contacting government did so in person, but only 20% would prefer to have used this channel. This difference between actual in–person contact and preference has been consistent across all three studies, although usage and preference levels have declined each year.

Figure 42 In-person contact—preferred use compared with actual use

Q4. Thinking of this most recent contact, did you do this...?
Q11. If you could access government services by telephone, over the internet, by mail, in-person, or by some other method, what would be your preferred way of doing it?
Base: All respondents (n=4016)

The proportion of people who prefer to use the telephone (33%) to contact government is similar to actual use (32%), a situation also found in the previous two studies.
There was a strong assumption across all focus groups that in three to five years time the dominant form of contact with government would be the internet, with a greater dependence on telephone call centres, at the expense of in-person contact.

‘I think a lot of it [government business] will be done on the internet because although a lot of people don’t use it now they will in the future... even old people are using it more and more, you don’t really have to contact anyone personally anymore. It’s all email or internet.’

An increase in use of the internet was also seen as an inevitable response to an increasing demand on government services, particularly from an ageing population.

‘The general normal business process is as a business grows the business provides services to its clientele by additional manpower. By sheer definition, the older population is growing and the government needs to be doing the same thing. But the growth for services will be so huge they have to find a way other than just manpower. It has to be with the internet.’
6.2 Preference for e-government service delivery channels

There is a strong preference, given a choice, for e-government (internet and telephone) services among the users of each of the main service delivery channels:

- **Internet users**—Nine in ten (91%) would prefer to use an e-government service: internet (76%), telephone (15%).
- **Telephone users**—Four in five (83%) would prefer to use an e-government service: internet (26%), telephone (57%).
- **In-person users**—Three in five (59%) would prefer to use an e-government service: internet (30%), telephone (29%).
- **Mail users**—Two thirds (67%) would prefer to use an e-government service: internet (36%), telephone (31%).

Figure 44 Preferred way of contacting government compared with channel actually used

Q11. If you could access government services by telephone, over the internet, by mail, in-person, or by some other method, what would be your preferred way of doing it?

Base: Telephone users (n=1286), internet users (n=1112), mail users (n=372), in-person users (n=1565)

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
There is a strong linear relationship between age and preferred way of contacting government. The younger the person, the more likely they are to prefer the internet, while the older the person, the more likely their preference is to be for telephone, and to a lesser extent, in-person contact.

Figure 45 Main preferred service delivery channels by age

Q11. If you could access government services by telephone, over the internet, by mail, in-person, or by some other method, what would be your preferred way of doing it?
Base: All respondents (n=4016)

6.3 Preference for organisation of government websites

Those who had used the internet to contact government were asked how they would prefer government services provided over the internet to be organised:
- by milestones in their life (such as having a child, buying a home, or retiring)
- by topic areas (such as driving and public transport, art and entertainment) or
- by government department name.

The level of preference for topic area (43%) and department name (41%) in 2007 is similar to that in 2006. This contrasts with the initial findings in 2004–05 where there was a stronger preference for services to be organised by topic area (58%) rather than department name (32%).

Support for government services to be organised by ‘milestones in life’ is relatively low, although this has increased slightly since 2004–05.
Figure 46 Preference for organisation of government websites

Q18C. When accessing government services over the internet, would you generally prefer services organised by...

Base: Those who used internet to contact government in the past 12 months (n=2334)
Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding of decimals.
seven Security and Privacy Issues
seven Security and Privacy Issues

Overview

- Security remains an underlying concern for those who contact government by internet.
- Half (52%) of those who had contacted a government agency or service using the internet would prefer to re-enter their personal information each time they use the website rather than have their details stored by the agency.
- Similar proportions (54%) prefer complete anonymity to a personalised interface when contacting government.
- These attitudes are consistent with the findings of previous studies.
- There is a growing preference for the convenience of updating information for government only once, and having government advise other agencies of these changes. This has grown from 64% in 2004–05 to 73% in 2007.
- Most people (84%) would prefer a high level of security and a longer transaction time to a faster but less secure transaction.
- More people who have contacted government over the internet are willing to provide their credit card details (61%) than bank account details (50%) when doing so.

7.1 Introduction

People who had used the internet to contact government in the previous 12 months were asked general questions about their willingness to provide personal information to government using the internet.

7.2 Anonymity and convenience

There is no clear preference for convenience over anonymity. Just over half (52%) of those who had contacted government using the internet at least once in the previous 12 months would prefer the anonymity of re-entering their personal information each time they use a website, rather than have it stored by a government agency for use on their next contact. Two in five (43%) would prefer the agency to store their personal information for use next time.

These results are consistent with the trends identified in both 2004–05 and 2006.
Figure 47 Preference between re-entering information and agency storing the details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Re-entering personal information each time</th>
<th>Government storing information</th>
<th>Refused/can’t say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q18A: When accessing government services over the internet, would you generally prefer: Having to re-enter your personal information each time you go back to a website; the agency storing your information for next time you go to that website?

Base: Contacted government agencies using internet in the past 12 months (n=2334)

Note 1: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.

Note 2: Question wording has varied slightly each year of the study.

A reticence about providing personal details is not just an issue in dealing with government; focus group participants, with prompting, expressed concerns about the broad issue of security and privacy of information on the internet.

‘I get worried about the amount of personal detail you have to give on the internet. I don’t like the degree of information you give about yourself to someone who is providing you a service ... a lot is irrelevant to what they are doing for you and you would not give it if you were dealing with them directly say in a shop.’

There is a difference however, in the organisation the person is dealing with. Larger businesses are seen to have more credibility in respecting the privacy of people’s information and there is an assumption that government is secure.

‘That’s the risk with giving information on the internet. You just have to accept you are going to get spam and hopefully nothing worse... but you have to be careful ... it depends on who you are dealing with. Small business I don’t know but say a bank you have to think it’s pretty good all you get is other stuff from them [banking product information]. The government is the only one who will really protect you.’
7.3 Anonymity and tailored services

There is also no clear preference for a personalised interface over anonymity among those who had contacted government by internet in the previous 12 months. Just over half (54%) would prefer to remain anonymous while two in five (39%) would be willing to provide information to enable their interface with the government agency to be customised.

These attitudes have fluctuated slightly over the three studies, with preference for anonymity ranging from 50% of people in 2004–05 to 59% in 2006 and 54% in 2007.

**Figure 48 Preference between tailored services and anonymity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Customisation of Services</th>
<th>Remaining Completely Anonymous</th>
<th>Refused/Can’t Say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004–05</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q18B When dealing with government services over the internet, would you generally prefer: Providing information which could be used to help customise or personalise what you are able to see or do or remaining completely anonymous?

Base: Contacted government agencies using internet in the past 12 months (n=2334)

Note 1: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.

Note 2: Question wording has varied slightly each year of the study.
7.4 Updating information

Preference for the convenience of only having to update personal details, such as change of address, on a website once, rather than having to notify multiple agencies of the change, is much clearer.

Three quarters (73%) of those who contacted government by internet in the previous 12 months indicated they would prefer this, an attitude consistent with 2006 (72%) and one which confirms a major shift in opinion from 2004–05 when two thirds (64%) held this view.

Figure 49 Preference between telling government once and advising agencies separately

Q18D When updating information such as change of address on government websites, would you generally prefer telling the government once and have them advise all other agencies you deal with, or you advising each agency yourself?

Base: Contacted government agencies using internet in the past 12 months (n=2334)

Note: Question wording has varied slightly each year of the study.
7.5 Security and ease and speed of access

There is an overwhelming preference for a high level of security, albeit with a slower transaction time, than for faster and easier transactions with less security. More than four in five (84%) internet users expressed this view, an attitude consistent with 2006 (82%) and 2004–05 (77%).

Figure 50 Preference for security over ease of use

Q18E When accessing government services through the internet, would you generally prefer: a higher level of security that adds time to transactions or a lower level of security that is faster and easier to complete?

Base: Contacted government agencies using internet in the past 12 months (n=2334)
Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
7.6 Willingness to provide credit card details

Three in five (61%) of those who had contacted government through the internet in the previous 12 months indicated that they were willing to provide credit card details over the internet when accessing government services. This is consistent with 2006 (60%).

Figure 51  Willingness to provide credit card details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q18F: When accessing government services over the internet, are you willing to provide credit card details over the internet?

Base: Contacted government agencies using internet in the past 12 months (n=2334)

Note 1: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.
Note 2: The question was not asked in 2004-05.

Although the proportion of those using the internet to contact government who are unwilling to provide credit card details has remained consistent between 2006 and 2007 (at close to one-third), there has been some shift in the reasons for this view.

While security generally remains the main concern, this is less likely to be a reason for not providing a government agency with credit card details than in 2006. In 2006, half (52%) of those who were unwilling to give details expressed a concern about security in general, and one in five (20%) concern about the internet specifically. There has been a sizable reduction in the frequency of these concerns in 2007, with two in five (43%) expressing security concerns in general and 15% concerned about the security of the internet. There has, however, been an increase in lack of trust with government websites in those unwilling to provide their credit card details over the internet, with 16% citing this as a reason in 2007.
Figure 52 Reasons for not wanting to provide credit card details

Concerns about security in general: 2006 - 52%, 2007 - 43%
Not trusting government websites: 2006 - 15%, 2007 - 16%
Concerns about internet security: 2006 - 20%, 2007 - 15%
Don't own a credit card: 2006 - 9%, 2007 - 9%
Privacy concerns: 2006 - 8%, 2007 - 5%
Past experience of fraud: 2006 - 7%, 2007 - 3%
Don't see why government would need it: 2006 - 3%, 2007 - 2%
Concerned about scams on internet: 2006 - 2%, 2007 - 2%
Concerned about Hackers: 2006 - 2%, 2007 - 2%

Q18G. What are the main reasons that you are not willing to provide these details?
Base: Those not willing to provide their credit card details over the internet (n=805)
Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% as only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.
### 7.7 Willingness to provide bank account details

When accessing government services over the internet, people are less willing to provide bank account details than credit card details. One in two (50%) of these internet users were willing to provide their bank account details over the internet (for government services), compared with three in five (61%) willing to give their credit card details. A slightly higher proportion of people are willing to provide bank account details than in 2006 (45%).

**Figure 53** Willingness to provide bank account details

![Bar chart showing willingness to provide bank account details over the internet in 2006 and 2007.](chart)

Q18H. When accessing government services over the internet, are you willing to provide bank account details over the internet?

Base: Contacted government agencies using internet in the past 12 months (n=2334)

Note 1: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding of decimals.

Note 2: The question was not asked in 2004–05.

Reasons for not wanting to provide bank account details over the internet when contacting government are similar to the reasons for not wanting to provide credit card details.

Although half (49%) of those who are unwilling to provide bank account details over the internet have a concern about security in general, this is lower than in 2006, when nearly two in three (57%) held this view.

Specific concerns about the security of the internet have also fallen from 14% in 2006 to 7% in 2007.
Figure 54. Reasons for not wanting to provide bank account details

Q18. What are the main reasons that you are NOT willing to provide these details?

Base: Those not willing to provide their bank account details over the internet (n=1070)

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% as only the most common reasons are summarised in the above figure.
eight Conclusions
eight Conclusions

The uptake of e-government services continues to grow.

The use of e-government services (internet and telephone) has continued to grow in 2007. This growth has primarily come from an expanded use of the internet to contact government, while telephone use has remained relatively static. The growth in use of the internet has been offset by a move away from in-person contact.

This indicates that the more significant barriers to use of the internet to access government identified in the initial 2004–05 study have been overcome to a significant degree.

Focus group participants see further dependence on the internet as inevitable, but have some concerns about the impact on the shape of future government service delivery and the ability of government online services to keep pace with the needs of an ageing population.

Satisfaction with e-government service delivery remains high, but standards will need to be refined and adapted for this to continue.

Overall, satisfaction with service delivery has remained constant and at very high levels. This is significant given that expectations have risen significantly in recent years as large commercial organisations have invested in improving online service delivery. The fact that government is keeping pace—demonstrated by constant, high levels of satisfaction—is an achievement.

It is unlikely that satisfaction levels will rise, given the current high base. Current approaches and standards, therefore, need to be refined and adapted to continue to achieve high levels of satisfaction. An area for future focus is the dissatisfaction expressed with the length of time spent waiting for a response.

Opportunities exist for use of e-government services to continue to increase.

Many people use a non e-government channel even though it is not their preference. Most people would prefer to contact government using an e-government service, indicating a potentially strong future for this type of access.

The strength of preference for the internet suggests that it, rather than the telephone, will drive any future demand for e-government services. A large proportion of those who have not used the internet for their last contact with government do, however, use the internet for other reasons. While not all government contact activities can be conducted through the internet, this suggests that considerable potential for growth in use of the internet to contact government remains.
The telephone is the only service delivery channel where preference and use are balanced, with close to the same proportion of people nominating the telephone as their preferred channel as are actually using it to access government. This provides further weight to the prediction that telephone use is likely to remain stable, and future demand for e-government services will come from the internet.

**Future growth in use of e-government will require expanded access to services and improved content and design of websites.**

Choice of service delivery channel is largely driven by convenience or a desire to deal directly with a ‘real’ person. For some users, however, choice is based on a belief there is no alternative or that a particular channel is the only suitable way to make contact.

The main reasons for not using e-government services—a perception that e-government services are not possible or available and a preference for face-to-face contact—have shown little change over time.

Most people currently using the internet can be encouraged to increase their use. Strategies directed at making government websites easier to find or to use would encourage this. Similarly, improvements in content and the type and quality of information available from websites would support greater use. Addressing infrastructure issues, such as faster loading websites and more reliable connection to websites, would also encourage more use.

The majority of those not currently using the internet to contact government are interested in doing so. Providing greater opportunity for these potential users to have access to both computers and the internet, and improving their skill levels in using the internet and computers in general, would encourage greater internet use.

Age is a significant factor in internet use and preference; both decline substantially with age. However, use of the internet to contact government has increased across all age groups since 2004–05, particularly in older age groups. This has ramifications for future service delivery design and was reflected in focus group concerns that the usability needs of older internet users not be overlooked.

**Some challenges remain to remove the barriers to greater e-government uptake and to improve the usability of e-government services.**

More people would use e-government services if they were aware of their availability.

Improvements to the usability of government websites are still required. Strategies to make government services easier to find would address this. Similarly, improvements to the management and presentation of content, and in the type and quality of information available from websites, would support greater use of the internet.
Security is a fundamental condition of doing business with government over the internet.

There is a clear message that security is a fundamental condition of doing business with government over the internet. Most people indicated that they would trade convenience (time savings) for additional security.

Given the findings that convenience and timeliness are key components to maintaining high satisfaction levels, particularly with e-government channels, some flexibility and choice in balancing security and convenience options may need consideration.

There is a potential role in educating users of e-government services about safety in using the internet and the strength and quality of the security of government websites.

This is more so for older people, who remain most concerned about security and privacy issues.
Appendix

Background and Methodology
9.1 Terms of reference

This project tracks Australians’ use of and satisfaction with government services delivered by the four service delivery channels of internet, telephone, mail and in-person contact. The principal concern is to monitor the use of e-government services (internet and telephone) in terms of the adoption of, and satisfaction with, e-government across all tiers of government, compared with the more traditional methods of service delivery. Consequently, this enables government to plan for the future delivery and prioritization of e-government services and refine the quality and level of service delivery strategies.

Project objectives

The overall objectives were to:
- provide an overview of the range of e-government services
- provide an overview of the uptake of e-government services
- identify drivers of satisfaction for e-government services
- profile users and non-users of e-government
- identify impediments and barriers to e-government use
- measure user satisfaction with e-government services and identify possible future service delivery expectations
- compare findings with 2004–05 and 2006 to track any changes in the attitudes, satisfaction and experience of e-government users.

Research team

Roy Morgan Research conducted the research in association with dandolopartners. The study was developed, conducted and the results analysed and reported in close consultation with AGIMO.

9.2 Methodology

The 2007 study reflects the basic design developed for the original 2004–05 study and continued in 2006. The 2007 approach consisted of three stages:
- A pilot test in May 2007 to test the questionnaire and average interview length. (Some new questions were added to the 2007 survey and some questions reworded slightly.)
- A telephone survey of a representative sample of the Australian population aged 18 or more. Interviewing was conducted in May and June 2007 with 4,016 interviews obtained. All interviews were with people who had had contact with a government agency in the previous 12 months.
• Qualitative focus group research conducted in July 2007 involving thirty-four participants in four locations in metropolitan Tasmania and Victoria, and in regional New South Wales/Victoria and Queensland.

**Sample design**

In conducting studies designed to track results over time, it is essential to ensure that any changes in the consistency of outcomes with previous studies, or identification of trends and directions, are attributable to real world changes as opposed to either sample or non-sampling error. Consequently, any refinement or change to the methodology implemented for the current and previous studies needs to be noted and considered as part of the interpretation of the results.

Methodological amendments were introduced in 2007 to the size of the sample and the sources of study participants.

**Sample size**

The sample design for the 2004–05 study was a two stage design, with a randomly drawn sample (N=3,839) drawn from the electronic WhitePages® supplemented by 2,007 interviews among known e-government users drawn from the Roy Morgan Research Single Source data base.

In the 2006 study a large sample (N=5,040) was again drawn from the electronic WhitePages® and stratified by area and quoted for gender and age.

The 2007 sample design recognised that with the substantial growth in household internet ownership and use of e-government services, a smaller sample (N=4,016) could be used without having any statistically significant implications for the reliability of study estimates.

**Participant source**

The second methodological change involved the use of random digit dialling as the survey sample frame. This replaced the electronic WhitePages® telephone directory used in the previous two studies.

**The 2007 survey sample**

Gender and age quotas were applied to ensure that a representative sample of the Australian population aged 18 and older was contacted in the 2007 telephone survey. The survey sample was also stratified by area, with over sampling in the smaller regions to ensure that there were sufficient interviews to allow for statistically valid regional analysis of results if required. The final distribution of interviews for the 2007 study is shown in Figure 55.
### Figure 55 Sample distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other NSW</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Vic</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other QLD</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other SA</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Perth</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other WA</td>
<td>160</td>
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<td>NT</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Darwin</td>
<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other NT</td>
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<td>TAS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Tas</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4,016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weighting**

The data in this report has been weighted in accordance with the current Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates for population distribution in each state and territory, and by gender and age. Unweighted number of respondents (N) has been reported below each figure to indicate how many respondents answered the question in the 2007 survey.

**Focus groups**

Focus groups were designed to explore specific topics and issues in greater depth than was practical in a quantitative telephone survey. Findings are qualitative in nature and are reported as quotations and conclusions to help understand the results from the telephone survey.

Focus groups were conducted to:
- explore what drives satisfaction when people are dealing with government agencies
- evaluate the extent to which people prefer one channel of communication over another and the reasons why
- explore what kind of changes and improvements in the way people interact with government are desirable and are expected in the future.
The 2007 groups were conducted in Hobart, Melbourne, Albury/Wodonga and Emerald in Queensland. Participants were recruited for each group using random digit dialling according to the following criteria:

- internet use (All were internet home users.)
- gender (An equal proportion of males and females were recruited for each group.)
- age (Participants were proportionally recruited in the following age groups: 18–35, 36–55, 56–65 and 66–75.)
- use of government websites (Participants were evenly split between ‘experienced’ and ‘inexperienced’ users of government websites. Experienced users were defined as those who had accessed/looked at a government website in the previous 12 months; ‘inexperienced’ were those who had not accessed/looked at a government website in the previous 12 months.)
- public sector employees (Australian, state, territory and local government and affiliated agencies) were limited to a maximum of two per group.